

them from the south. This may explain the absence of notes on this bird in his field diary. On the other hand the forest, now found at Chimonzo, may once have been far more extensive prior to its being cut out by natives for agricultural purposes, and may have once extended further north, to Inhambane.

## On the South African subspecies of the Variegated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus* Lesson

by P. A. CLANCEY

Received 11th November, 1950

In the toptotypical populations of *Indicator variegatus variegatus* Lesson, 1830: Knysna, southern Cape Province, South Africa (*vide* Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 50), the wings of ♂♂ measure 108–114, ♀♀ 104–109 mm. Study of a limited amount of material of this rather elusive species kindly placed at my disposal by the Directors of the following museums: South African Museum, Cape Town (through Dr. J. M. Winterbottom), East London Museum, Transvaal Museum, Pretoria (through Mr. O. P. M. Prozesky), and the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin), shows that birds agreeing with the toptotypical populations occur north in the eastern tropical littoral of south-eastern Africa to about Inhambane, Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, and as far north as the south-eastern Sudan and south-central Abyssinia in the interior of the African continent. In Portuguese East Africa to the north of the established range of *I. v. variegatus* occur populations of rather smaller-sized birds which appear referable to the subspecies *I. v. virescens* Reichenow, 1889: Lewa, Usambara Mountains, eastern Tanganyika Territory (see Reichenow, *Journ. f. Ornith.*, vol. xvii, 1889, p. 247), as recognised by Friedmann, *Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, No. 208, 1955, pp. 89–115. A male from Mt. Gorongoza and another from Macequece, in the Vumba Highlands, have wings 104.5, 105, an unsexed adult from Coguno has a wing of 101, while an adult female from Beira has a wing of 103 mm. Friedmann (p. 115) gives the wing of the male of *I. v. virescens* as 100–105, and the female 98 mm. (apparently only one measured). This author also writes (p. 91), "It is possible that the birds of eastern Mozambique may yet prove to belong to this race (*I. v. virescens*) rather than the nominate one," and this observation is here confirmed by the finding of populations with the mensural characters of the race concerned as far south as northern Sul do Save in the eastern lowlands of south-eastern Africa. *I. v. variegatus* and *I. v. virescens* should both be admitted to the South African list on the basis of the above findings.

In a series of 2 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀ from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland occur some extremely greyish backed examples, completely devoid of the olive lake colour to the fringes of the feathers of the mantle, rump and wings, so typical of the majority of *I. v. variegatus*. The specimens concerned are not worn, so that the significance of this development is at present obscure, but it is interesting to note that Zedlitz (*vide Journ. f. Ornith.*, vol. lxiii, 1915, p. 8) has already recorded such variants from elsewhere in Africa.